

ON
THE CORN LAWS,

AND OTHER

LEGISLATIVE RESTRICTIONS,

BY LAWRENCE HEYWORTH, ESQ.

*"Blame where we must, be candid where we can,
And vindicate the laws of God to man."—Pope.*

SIXTH EDITION.

CONTAINING NEW MATTER, IN REFUTATION OF POPULARLY RECEIVED
FALLACIES ON THE MONETARY SYSTEM: AND ADDITIONAL EVIDENCES,
THAT THE TENDENCY OF A CORN LAW IS, TO BRING RUIN ON
THE AGRICULTURE, AND THE REVENUE, AS WELL AS
ON THE COMMERCE OF ENGLAND.

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“It is wholly beyond the power of the legislature,—(so says Sir Robert Peel in his speech May 12th, 1843; and adds)—it is utterly impossible, for a legislative enactment, to guarantee a certain price for corn to the producer:—it is a mere delusion, to suppose, that any duty, levied on the imported foreign grain, can effect this object permanently. The prosperity of the manufactures and of commerce is much more essential to the prosperity of the landed interest,” than

THE CORN LAWS,

which impose a duty on Foreign Corn, to prevent its importation into this country; and are especially effective and oppressive, *when* scarcity and dearness make the want of bread most distressingly felt by the masses of the people.

In the honest conviction of the writer he has endeavoured by this paper, to portray a graphic and historical delineation of Corn Law effects, shewing that the Corn Laws generate distress by aggressive stages amongst all classes,—overwhelm the nation with pauperism, and threaten it with imminent and irretrievable ruin. He has directed attention to the astonishing extent and rapid growth of manufacturing prosperity, to the vast extension of commerce it has developed, and to the national wealth it has created, when happily left free from the blighting influence of legislative intermeddling: and also, to the social disorders which a redundant population periodically inflicted on England, previous to the extension of her commerce, and the establishment of her manufactories; proving historically, that impediments to commerce, by extinguishing the increase of demand for the employment of labour, engender crime against property, riots, national discontents, and social disorganization; which neither physical power, the force of law, nor the sinister influence of superstition could subdue. The more effectually to enforce an earnest appeal to the British Public, for their total and immediate abolition, he has, in conscientious faithfulness, contrasted these baneful effects of perverse legislation, with the righteous and happy operation and peace-establishing tendencies of divinely-commended Free Trade, or universal and unrestricted commerce.

If scarcity be a good, then restrict every production, and prohibit every import: and to complete the work of havoc, set fire to every stack, and burn down every warehouse. But if plenty be a blessing, stimulate *your own* and *foreign* productive industry by opening wide your ports for the reception of every commodity, so that your capacious granaries may be replenished with food, and your spacious warehouses with merchandize; and be for yourselves and for the whole world, exhaustless storehouses.

TO THE
BRITISH PUBLIC.

HOW DOES CHEAP BREAD PRODUCE HIGH WAGES AND
PROMOTE GENERAL PROSPERITY?

In summing up his chiefest blessings, God enumerates them thus : "*A land in which thou shalt eat thy bread without scarceness ; a land in which thou shalt not lack anything.*" Has God made the earth to bring forth plentifully? Has he furnished you, by means of your industry, with the power of eating your bread without scarceness? Yes. Have *human laws* interdicted the free interchange of the produce of your labour for the bounty of His providence, and made you eat your bread with scarceness? Yes. Then let God's promises be justified, and his bounty praised; but let the landowners' and monopolisers' sordid *legislative schemes* to enrich themselves, by artificially perpetuating the scarcity of any necessary article, be denounced for their folly, and execrated for their impious inhumanity.

When food is cheap, the industrial classes clothe themselves, and the increased demand in the home market produces great manufacturing and commercial prosperity; more hands are required, and to obtain them, higher wages are given. On the other hand, when food is dear, a large portion, or in numerous instances, the whole of the wages of the working classes is expended in providing it for their families, and their demand for manufactures ceases; our exports are increased, and foreign markets are glutted with the very goods which should have clothed the wives and families of English workmen, and have made their homes comfortable. This glut of foreign markets with British manufactures, consequent on a diminished home consumption, is experienced, not because the unusual quantity thus pressed upon them is absolutely more than they want; but because the restrictive policy of our commercial laws does not freely admit into our markets their corn, or sugar, or coffee, &c., which being all that foreigners have to offer in payment for our goods, they are not able to purchase our fabrics to the extent of their need. Ruinous forced sales of them abroad are therefore effected, at a loss, that our millowners may obtain quick remittances, and continue to pay the operatives their weekly wages. Bankers, sensibly alive to the waning value of the securities for the sums advanced to their constituents, and knowing their embarrassed circumstances, become distrustful, and withdraw from them their usual accommodation of capital. A national panic ensues;—the Bank of England takes alarm, and with fastidious caution, restricts its discounts; and by the reflux of MILLIONS of bank notes and hard cash paid into its coffers, (in liquidation of a class of bills, esteemed no longer to be safely discountable, and also paid into the bank, to replace large sums of gold extracted, to be exported in the emergency of famine, to buy corn, which retired currency the bank has no secure or profitable inducement to re-issue,) a *scarcity* of money is, by this two-fold absorption of the currency, so extensively and universally experienced, that *to this palpable effect and consequence of a scarcity of food*, is popularly attributed the distressing stagnation of all trade. Bankruptcies follow, mills stop, operatives are

without employment, or work only half time; and consequently wages fall, or what comes to the same thing, their weekly earnings are diminished, and millions worth of manufactures are not produced, have no existence, and to that extent are a great national loss, because a want of demand has suspended the active industry of hundreds of thousands of willing hands, which would have been cheerfully and actively engaged in producing them, had food been plentiful and cheap; or if scarcity and dearness had been removed, by large importations, free of duty. These unemployed operatives, after having pawned everything, are driven, in destitution, from their cottages, which are left without tenants. No additional buildings are wanted. Masons, bricklayers, plasterers, plumbers, joiners, and painters are, therefore, thrown out of work. No new mills are erected, no new machinery is required. Mechanics, foundry-men, labourers at iron works, colliers, miners and their tool makers, are also deprived of employment. A diminished quantity of all commodities yields less employment and remuneration, in every branch of the transit and distribution department of them. Carriers, sailors, wheelwrights, ship carpenters, block, sail, and rope makers, anchor and blacksmiths; porters and common labourers are compelled to wage a fatal competition for the diminished aggregate amount of employment and wages; and in consequence of their inability from this cause, aggravated by the dearness of living, the whole labouring population cease to be customers, as heretofore, to shoemakers, hatters, tailors, potters, chair and furniture makers, shopkeepers, and lastly, *bread-bakers* and *dairy-farmers*, who therefore, become themselves victims of the all-pervading evil. A scarcity of bread and dear food sinks them, too, into the miserable ranks of the non-producers, to augment the swelling numbers of dependent pauperised consumers. And lastly, the farmers learn, by fatal experience, that the corn laws, by perpetuating famine, have reduced large masses of those, who formerly were able to pay for wheaten bread, to content themselves with a short allowance of oatmeal and potatoes; and therefore, that their crop of wheat, under the circumstance of an ordinary good harvest, is, as compared with the *curtailed consumption*, an *over production*; which must be sold at an extreme low price, whatever their rents may be. These unprofitable sales of agricultural produce, force the farmers to adopt the nationally impoverishing process of producing less. Large tracts of land are thrown out of tillage, and labourers out of employment; and farmers are ruined: just because dear food has previously compelled the manufacturers to stop their mills, and operatives, in every branch of trade, to suspend their productive labours. Agricultural distress, the certain fruit of the corn laws, every where prevails; and *RENTS, for the maintenance of which they were enacted*, are only partially paid; and finally, falling rents discover to the landholders the sin of unjust legislation. Now, as it is equally as impossible for a government, as for an individual, to draw water out of an empty well, so it is quite as impossible for a state to exact at the same rate, an undiminished amount of revenue from taxation levied on a greatly reduced national stock of commodities: hence, it follows, that, as these have decreased, so the national resources have failed, for the last four years, to yield the usual amount of revenue, year by year, until the deficiency on revenue, derivable from various articles of taxation, has reached nearly five millions per annum. And if the corn laws and differential duties on colonials be not repealed, the articles of home and foreign productions will not increase; therefore, the only way of obtaining the revenue required by the state, must be by a continuance, and even a yearly increase of the property tax.

It is an invariable rule, that, if the parties producing any article of common consumption (it may be corn, or colonials, or any thing else) have political power to limit, *by law*, the supply of that article, they will raise its price in the market to the extent of their *wicked privilege*, which will diminish the consumption, and ultimately the production, not only of the article rendered dear by the operation of the law, expressly enacted, to extort for it a high price; but also of *all other things* in proportion, and, therefore, will contract and depress every other trade, as experience shows the corn laws to have done. But if the parties producing any thing, have no such baneful legislative power, their efforts will be continually directed to augment the quantity, and to diminish the cost of pro-

duction; which will react on the production of all other things, to increase their quantity, and to economise their cost, as manufactures have done.

God has given us a country, "whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass." He has supplied our island with vast mineral stores, out of which to form implements of husbandry, to procure food plentifully, and to construct machinery to provide clothing abundantly; and by His peculiar blessing upon this country, machinery, seventy years ago, first began to lessen, and has since progressively obviated the tardy toil of, previously, ill-requited manual labour. It has clothed the naked of every land; and by the immense demand from all classes, for the cheapened articles obtained through its aid, an inexhaustible source of employment for labour has been created. In the short space of forty years, five hundred thousand emigrants, in search of employment, from Ireland, Scotland, and every agricultural county in England, have left their native homes, and have been added to the naturally increased population of Lancashire. They have flocked to settle in this county, solely because, being the seat of *mechanical industry*, they have found *plenty of employment, and higher wages* than could be obtained anywhere else. The productive powers of machinery have filled the country with an overflowing abundance of every useful commodity, and have, therefore, diffused wealth with unprecedented profusion, amongst all classes of the community throughout the empire; and our merchants, who have been the Almighty's almoners, to distribute and diffuse the bounties of his good providence, have sent forth and trafficked with these cheap wares, and "have enriched the kingdoms of the earth with the multitude of our merchandize and riches." These mechanically-cheapened manufactures have been, and are mainly the abundant and enduring source of all that affluence which has flooded England with unexampled wealth. They have enabled the state to sustain, during twenty years, the most lavish expenditure of public money, on the most wasteful war ever waged, to the enormous amount of thousands of millions, without causing any sensible diminution of the constant influx of this wealth; they have filled our country with all riches more effectually and profusely than if her hills had been mines of solid gold, and her mountains of silver. The most abundant possession of these precious metals could only serve the purpose of purchasing foreign or home productions, so long as their scarcity made them valuable; and as they are indistructible, their over-abundance would soon render them more valueless, because less useful than paving-stones; but with our manufactures, which are consumed in the using, and which are emphatically Englishmen's money, we freight our ships to every quarter of the globe, and purchase with them, from all the nations of the earth, every commodity and article of merchandize (except those prohibited by our own restrictive import duties) that, under the most favourable circumstances of soil and climate, God has given to them, or their skill and industry can produce, or that they are able to extract from their mines of gold and silver, or of other minerals. The benefit conferred on labour by machinery, in harmony with the naturally equitable and general law which regulates wages, namely, that the *larger the produce* by labour, in a given time, the *greater* will be the *operative's remuneration*, raised the wages of the unskilled operative and peasant from five and six shillings to fourteen shillings, and that of the skilled workman to twenty, thirty, and even sixty shillings per week. These improved circumstances changed the sustaining habits of the population, especially in the manufacturing districts, from being parsimonious eaters of oat cakes and rye bread, to become liberal customers to the farmers; for the coarser grain, to fatten cattle and pigs; and for wheat, to support themselves; so that during the period between 1793 and 1815, their demand so far outstripped the extension of tillage, and exceeded the amount of agricultural production, as to force up the price of wheat, from an average of forty to fifty shillings, to seventy or eighty, and at times to one hundred and forty shillings per quarter; being an *ADVANCE* in the price of *wheat* in the *inverse proportion* of the *DECLINE* in the price of *goods*; proving thereby, that the cheapened price of manufactures was the real cause of the rise in the price of agricultural produce; and not the excessive issue of paper money, which occurred about the same period; for the effect of a superabundance of money must have operated to raise simultaneously,

to a corresponding price, every article in the market. The stimulating effect of cheap manufactures had extended agriculture, (as the enclosure bills testify,) and improved tillage, so as, from the same breadth, to increase and cheapen its productions; when the enactment of the corn laws substituted a delusive for this salutary inducement, to render farming profitable, and to maintain land at its intrinsic value. In the universal advantage arising out of the use of machinery, all the landed proprietors in the kingdom have *largely* shared. The greatly enhanced rental, even in the agricultural hundred of Lonsdale, from eight thousand five hundred, to three hundred and one thousand nine hundred and eighty-seven pounds, or three thousand five hundred per cent. per annum, and similar increase in the other agricultural districts in Lancashire, and in the adjoining counties, markedly exemplify this fact; and yet more especially in those localities where machinery is most extensively introduced, and is actively employed in producing its benign influences. The yearly rental of Salford, for instance, has increased, in that manufacturing district, from twenty-five thousand seven hundred and seven pounds, to the amazing sum of two million seven hundred and three thousand two hundred and two, being an augmentation of about ten thousand four hundred per cent. per annum. The *free* importation of corn and other food from Ireland, by keeping down the price of provisions throughout the kingdom, and especially in the manufacturing districts, so far from tending to depreciate the value of landed property, has evidently served to foster that mechanical industry which has thus gratuitously augmented the value and rental of the landowners' estates; and the fact being known, it ought to dissipate all the groundless apprehensions entertained against the *honest* principles of free trade. This great increase in wages, and enormously enhanced value of land, resulting from the beneficial aid conferred by machinery on labour, has been obtained, notwithstanding that now there is, relatively, a diminished quantity of gold and silver, as compared with the immensely increased abundance of all other commodities, that of agricultural produce alone excepted.

If, to protect the manufacturers in the maintenance of the high prices charged for their goods previous to the introduction of machinery, misguided legislation had interfered to prevent the progress of these mechanical inventions,—if, to arrest this influx of cheap clothing for the poor, and adventitious wealth for the aristocracy, and for the proprietors of land generally, parliament had prohibited by law the use of machinery,—then the scarcity and dearness of cotton, woollen, and linen goods, &c., consequent thereon, would have kept down the consumption of these fabrics to the lowest point; and would not only have deprived the labouring population of sufficient clothing, as certainly as that the corn laws, by their raising the price of bread, do now deprive them of sufficient food, but the costliness of the necessary garments made of these fabrics to the parties who could afford to buy them, would have absorbed their means of purchasing all other commodities and productions, (those of the soil included,) to an extent that would have kept all other trades and employments (agricultural not excepted) in a state of the deepest depression; and labour would have become, ere this, as great a drug here, as in Poland. By the competition of an increased population for the stationary amount of employment, consequent on the suppression of mechanical industry, wages would have been reduced by this time almost to nothing; and England, instead of being, as she now is, a vast magazine of useful commodities, the world's commercial depôt, and, therefore, the wealthiest nation on the face of the earth, would have remained sunk in scarcity and poverty, deservedly the pauperized victim of her sordid, wicked, suicidal, and foolish legislative policy. Political economists attribute the low prices of provisions, and low rate of wages, recorded in the early pages of English history, solely to the *scarcity of gold and silver*, whereas, the *scarcity of manufactures and merchandize*, at that period, contracted within extremely narrow limits the consumption of all things; and induced the growers and holders of surplus corn, as it does those of America at this time, to part with large quantities of it, in exchange for small quantities of other commodities; and this circumstance mainly determined its relatively low money value. In the twelfth and thirteenth century “the languishing state of commerce kept the inhabitants poor and contemptible;

and the political institutions were calculated to render that poverty perpetual. If any merchant or manufacturer rose by industry and frugality to a degree of opulence, he found himself but the more exposed to injuries from the avidity of the nobles." And, as regards the rate of wages, we learn, not only that the almost total want of productive employment for labourers, except in husbandry, depressed the labouring classes to the most abject state of dependence; and by the unmitigated competition of their daily increasing numbers, for the same amount of labour, compelled them to accept the small pittance of those low wages; but that, from time to time, this limited amount of labour, and total want of employment, for the redundant population, involved the whole community in rapine, plunder, murder, and national anarchy; which, owing to the insecurity of property, and the paralyzation of industry, incident thereto, was surely followed by periodical famines, that swept away large portions of the industrial inhabitants. In the thirteenth century, "men were never secure in their houses, and whole villages were often plundered by bands of robbers;" and, in the fourteenth century, "the disorders of the times, from foreign wars and intestine dissensions, but above all, the cruel famine, which obliged the nobility to dismiss many of their retainers, increased the number of robbers in the kingdom; and no place was secure from their incursions. They met in troops like armies, and over-ran the country." Even so recently as in the reign of queen Elizabeth, "legal monopolies tended to extinguish all domestic industry, which is much more valuable than foreign trade, and is the foundation of it;" and three or four hundred able-bodied men were without employment in every county, because there were then no factories, nor many manufacturing establishments, and comparatively but little commerce to draw into useful occupations the accretive surplus of the ever-increasing rural population. "These vagabonds, therefore, were driven to live by theft and rapine; and sometimes met in troops to the number of sixty, and committed spoil on the inhabitants, overawed their accusers, and intimidated the magistrates." "Forty persons, in the one county of Somersetshire, were executed in one year for robberies, thefts, and other felonies, and this distressing state of things terminated about the close of her reign as heretofore in nature's compensating remedy for such evils, namely, a depopulating famine." Alas! that England, with her vast resources and means of keeping in healthy employment every industrial hand, should, through the pertinacious adherence of her government to a grossly mistaken, and by themselves repudiated commercial policy, be doomed again to experience an approach towards the recurrence of such a disastrous condition of society.

The rule, that—"A scarcity in any necessary article, by enhancing its cost, incapacitates the masses of the people from being consumers of other things, and by throwing the labourers out of employment who would have been engaged in producing them, tends to produce universal pauperism"—is infallible. Hence it is, that yielding to this rule, the scarcity and consequent high price of food, devised and maintained by act of parliament, have gradually produced a general and constantly increasing stagnation in every trade during the last four years. The uniform testimony of shopkeepers, in every business, and from every part of the kingdom, (although bad trade has probably thinned their aggregate number,) is, that their business has fallen off to a very great extent during the recent years of dear bread; which proves the fact, that the bulk of the people have not been able to buy the same quantity of commodities they have usually been in the habit of consuming; and that the enhanced cost of food, in consequence of its scarcity, is the real source and cause of this all-prevailing commercial stagnation. The want of employment, and the depression of wages, are wholly attributable thereto; and even the successive losses sustained during this period by the importers of cotton, which are superficially ascribed to the over-production of this raw article, and to the superabundance of it over-stocking our market, are a calamity solely referable to this national scarcity of food, which has suspended the progressive increase of the consumption of cotton goods in a greater ratio than the production of cotton has increased.

The store of commodities used and required by the community, is the *ONLY* fund, out of which all trades, of *every grade*, are, or can be remunerated: (money,

whether gold, silver, or paper, is simply a means contrived to facilitate their distribution ;) if, therefore, the store of all kinds of raw and manufactured commodities in the kingdom be plentiful, all are well paid, and trade everywhere flourishes : but if this common fund be diminished by the scarcity of any article whatsoever, and especially, if the article lacking be one of common necessity, it is self-evident that the remuneration to each must be proportionably less ; and trades all over the country will be depressed accordingly. If the article wanted was food, which could only be had from abroad, plenty of money, gold, silver, or paper, could not be a substitute, or be made of any use to obviate the general consequent distress, except by exporting it, to buy that very thing, for lack of which the whole commerce of the country languished. If, for instance, the Bank of England were recklessly to discount worthless, or unwarrantable paper, to a great amount, and thereby create an excess of paper currency, to the extent of tens of millions ; or, if the real money in every man's possession were suddenly doubled, either in nominal value or even in real quantity, it would not alter one iota of the relative position and privation of those who had no money, nor even of those who, previously, had not sufficient to buy enough of the scarce, and, consequently, dear article ; for, unless the quantity of the scarce article was increased by importation, that article would rise in value, just in proportion to the augmented ability of the competitors to purchase it, and the general stagnation in the demand for labour, and in the sale of other commodities, would necessarily remain unchanged. If the wages of the labourer were simultaneously advanced throughout the country, and every man's wages was doubled, it would not better the condition of those, who were suffering partial or positive privation, in the least degree ; for the competition of those parties, who could afford to have enough, would still raise the price of the scarce food, beyond their means ; and the advanced wages would enhance the cost of every thing, and keep all trade in an unchanged state of dulness. Nor could anything relieve the nation from its commercial distress but a supply of the necessary article.

Hence it follows, that in the plentiful year of 1835, when wheat was at less than 40s. per quarter, we had a period of great manufacturing and commercial prosperity, with good wages, for the simple reason that, besides everybody having sufficient food, upwards of £15,000,000 were saved to the labouring classes on *wheat alone*, which money being spent on manufactures, increased the demand for labour, and, therefore, raised wages. Peaceful contentment, and plenty, filled the whole country with the delightful scene of busy life and cheerful industry, every where actively engaged in multiplying the things which make up the total sum of national wealth, and the exchequer overflowed with the augmented revenue poured in from the taxes levied upon them. During the recent period of high prices for food, great has been the distress in the manufacturing districts, and all over the kingdom, *in all those trades whose tens of thousands mainly depend for employment on the ability of the working classes to be their customers*. Counting the number of British families at 5,000,000, and calculating each to spend only two shillings per week more for food when it is dear than when it is cheap, this would have diminished the consumption of manufactures at the rate of £25,000,000 worth per annum during the first year, and, from consequent want of employment and want of wages, would go on, as it has done, narrowing the consumption still more in each succeeding year. Tens of thousands of operatives and labourers during this trying time have been thrown out of work, who, writhing under the gnawings of hunger and the brooding anguish of a legally-contrived famine, have been forced into a deadly competition for the remaining labour with those who continued to be employed, and, week by week, have reduced to a lower and lower rate the nominal, or the real wages they received.

The capitalists have largely shared in the awful distress experienced by the operatives in this decline, to a destruction of profits, and even, in many instances, of capital also, of which, alas ! the present universal low wages, or diminished weekly earnings, want of employment, and destitution of labourers throughout the country, are the certain indications and necessary consequence.

The repeal of the corn laws would secure a steady supply of cheap food, in profitable exchange for our manufactures. And accompanied, as it undoubtedly

would be, by a repeal of all the restrictive laws in our commercial code, sugars, coffees, and other produce, would be admitted free of differential duties, from all parts, into our home markets; which, by increasing the quantity of cheap exchangeable commodities, would tend greatly to revive our internal traffic. If the differential duties on colonial produce were to be removed—if corn were permitted to be imported free of duty from abroad, whenever we wanted it, and the vast masses of the people were allowed to satisfy their hunger with cheap food, and other necessary comforts of existence, a double quantity of sugar would be consumed, a double quantity of coffee would be used, and it can scarcely be doubted that a double quantity of wheat would be required for the sufficient sustenance of the people. These articles, thus augmented in quantity, conveyed to, and consumed in England, would require twice the amount of shipping now engaged in carrying them, and employ twice the number of hands to build, rig, and navigate the ships, and in numerous other ways extend the field of well-paid employment for labour, and when imported, would be transported from the seaports to the interior, and from town to town, by railway. Payment for them would be made in manufactures, which would extend almost unlimitedly a demand for direct and indirect employment of mining, mechanical, skilled, and unskilled labour, and raise up an incalculable host of able consumers of wheat. These manufactures would be transmitted by the same conveyances that brought the foreign produce; and commercial travellers, employed in the sale and purchase of both, would vastly augment the number of railway passengers, and could not but greatly increase the profits of railway and canal companies, and shipowners, and give a corresponding demand for labour in those departments to an amount far beyond what the most sanguine might venture to predict. Warehouses, Shops, Houses, Cottages, Lands, and all fixed properties would rapidly increase in value by the flood tide of prosperity, which would flow in from the world's wealth; which wealth would be illimitably created by the world's industry, under the fostering influence of perfect freedom of commerce. The taxes collected on these vastly increased quantities of all commodities would augment and restore prosperity to our national revenue.

This extension of our foreign commerce would thus continue to bring a great accession of prosperity and employment (in such happy circumstances) to the flourishing condition of the home trade. Universal peace and an uninterrupted commerce with foreign countries, would be securely sustained on the safe foundation of mutual advantage and concurrent interests. The Christian duty of ministering to the wants of other nations, and of clothing their naked, out of the superabundance of our manufactures, would be effectually fulfilled; and an inexhaustible source of foreign commerce would be developed, co-extensive with an ever-increasing and industrious population, enjoying all the blessings of life, both at home and abroad. We should then occupy the happy, virtuous, and glorious position of that sanctified commercial people, of whom prophetic writ says, they shall have commercial "intercourse with all the nations of the earth; and their merchandise and their *hire*," (meaning profit and wages,) "shall be holiness unto the Lord: it shall not be treasured, nor laid up; for their merchandise shall be for all that dwell before the Lord on the face of the whole earth, to eat sufficiently and for durable clothing."

By this means we should receive, in return for our exports to foreign countries, out of their superabundance, cheap food for the thousands at home who die of hunger. God's command, to "Do unto others as we would they should do unto us," would not be violated by a wicked inhuman law, which restricts the admission of food to famishing multitudes, and condemns to indigent idleness, thousands of our foreign brethren, whose hearts would be rejoiced in being employed in producing it for them, but, through the process of this beneficent interchange, would be obeyed in spirit and in deed. His blessing would follow—the national distress would be removed—and the prosperity of the home trade would be restored. The competition of employers for all classes of labourers would raise their wages, and give them constant employment. "The fair day's wages for a fair day's work," which they would then readily obtain, would furnish them with money to purchase, and leisure to read, books; and from these abundant sources

of men's collected, and God's inspired wisdom, to cull all useful information, and cultivate their minds with a knowledge of all that can scripturally enlighten the spirit, and morally improve, and scientifically elevate the intellect of man. They would be independent, to fulfil their parental responsibilities, and would manfully assume the sacredly rightful office, which no man may take from them with impunity, of being God's vicegerent, to watch over their dear offspring, to control their education, and to confer on them its inestimable blessings. The effect of revived commerce would soon reach the agricultural labourer, and the high wages obtained in trades and manufactories would, as a matter of course, raise wages, and almost extinguish poor rates in the farming districts, by drawing off, as it always has done, their supernumerary labourers to supply the deficiency experienced in a healthy state of the manufacturing labour market. This prosperous condition of society, enabling farmers to place their sons and daughters in some of the numerous, useful, and profitable occupations, which would then be open to receive them, would relieve their parental solicitude, from their otherwise painfully hopeless and helpless inability to promote the prospects and welfare of their children.

In conclusion, let the inquiry be made—In what consists the wealth of this kingdom? Does it consist in the national possession of the precious metals, all of which have been purchased with our manufactures, and which in the whole of the currency, bullion included, amount only in the aggregate to about £30,000,000? In the congregated masses of building in the metropolis and other towns, which, if deserted, as the commerce-forsaken cities of Italy now are, would be of no value: or in the mere soil of these islands, which, with the burden of a pauperised population, would be worthless, even as a gift? No! the nation's wealth consists in an overflowing abundance of every exchangeable commodity that man's honest ingenuity and industry can produce or procure. And the element which alone sustains this wealth is the power of our industrious masses, by the aid of machinery, to produce, in almost miraculous abundance and *cheapness*, all useful commodities; and the unrestricted freedom of our enterprising merchants to exchange them in every country for the necessaries and comforts of life, wherever these can be most cheaply obtained, combined with the essential requisite, that the ability of the operatives to consume them be in nowise narrowed by any legislative monopoly. This condition of society is the true and only basis on which rests the nation's wealth. As individual drops of rain perpetuate the vast stream and volume of water that fills the broadest rivers and deepest seas, so the consumption of every article of merchandise by each and every individual, and the willing and diligent production and distribution of them by every hand of industry, maintains that mighty and salutary current of commerce which creates abundance, and fills an enlightened and active world of intellectual beings, with social comforts and happiness.

If the power of the industrious operatives to produce, or their ability to consume, be once permanently paralyzed, the wealth of the moneyed interest, the opulence of the merchants, traders, and manufacturers, the affluence of the landed proprietors, of the railway and canal shareholders, and the aggrandisement of the aristocracy, will be dissolved, will vanish away, and depart from the present possessors as surely and effectually as the shadow retires with the substance.

Workmen of England, merchants, manufacturers, shipowners, railway proprietors, bankers, landowners, farmers, and legislators, meditate seriously on these things. If we continue to maintain our restrictive commercial code, what will be the condition of the nation and of our children hereafter? Unless we make our commerce free as the winds of heaven, and wide as the earth, they must compete, in increased numbers, for a stationary, if not a diminished, means of existence. England has every convenience, every faculty, and every facility, for doing this; and if it be done, there will be ample room for their sons, and their sons' sons, to go on enlarging the field of commerce, until all things shall superabound, except man's labour, which, in the midst of such universally prevailing abundance of every thing, will have power to demand and obtain, a liberal remuneration for its industrious employment, as in proportion to such circumstances is now, and always has been the case in all ages and in all coun-



tries. England stands conspicuous on the face of the earth. If she adopt the principles of free trade, will she not yet rise in riches and glory? And will not other countries say, "Let us emulate her in her wise and righteous policy, and open our ports to every country of the earth." Other nations by pursuing this policy will be enriched as well as ourselves; and how can we conduct an extensive and profitable business if we deal only with pauper nations? Let us do what we can to enrich the people of other countries, by the free admission of the fruits of their labours into our markets, which will encourage their slumbering industry, and will rouse it to be actively employed in drawing from those resources *which God has given to them*, that abundance of native produce which will enrich them, and enable them to pour back in a continuous stream many fold the amount of riches we convey to them. Let us, in obedience to the scriptural rule, seek legislatively to promote another's wealth, rather than our own, and enrich ourselves by advancing the weal of all, for this is sound and true political economy; and let us not perversely treasure up *caaking* wealth, for any class of the community, by making the *other* classes poor, through legal spoliation; nor yet vainly attempt to enrich the nation, by the impoverishing effects of invidious and vindictive tariffs, on the commerce of other countries: and God, who clothes with flowery beauty the grass of the fields, will not only much more clothe, feed, and enrich our mortal, but will also thus adorn our *spiritual* nature with the transcendent beauty of the truest wisdom. Then universal man would enjoy the abundance that would flow through the channels which the wise economy of God's good providence has approved and appointed to bless mankind. Then the distribution of our cheap manufactures, if we freely admitted their products in return, would beautifully illustrate the consummation of the divinely-enjoined maxim:—"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosoms:"—which is as practically true in political economy, as it is virtually true in spiritual ethics. The deep-felt and wide-spread misery brought upon all by the corn and provision laws demonstrate their selfish and sordid origin, and denounce their iniquity. As Christians, who ask God to give daily bread to all, humanity calls upon you to express on all occasions your utter abhorrence of all laws whose object is designedly to create scarcity, which are revoltingly opposed to the statutes of God and the benign precepts of the Gospel. As sincere religious men, who pray that "His will may be done on earth as it is in heaven," put forth unceasingly your combined efforts to obtain, by every lawful means, the total and immediate abolition of all laws which interdict men from ministering to each other's wants and necessities out of their relative superabundance. As a nation of Bible Christians, remember that God, speaking to the Hebrew nation, affirms that "it is the Lord thy God that giveth thee the power to get wealth;" and that the sanctified conditions of beneficially obtaining it are prescribed in the promise made by Him who cannot lie, when he says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," that is, be his faithful subjects, and as such, earnestly endeavour, through the exercise of the privileged portion of political power you enjoy in the right of suffrage, to obtain the obliteration of those wicked statutes which impiously proscribe the bounties of God's providence from being dispensed to, and abundantly shared by the poor operative, in exchange for the produce of his honest labour, and thus assimilate the political laws of your social government, as well as the rules by which you regulate your individual conduct to his revealed will, "and all things needful" which constitute a nation's wealth, "shall be added unto you." And let a firm faith in God that he will fulfil the promise; to engrave his laws on our hearts, and to write them in our minds, by first teaching us to understand that their beneficent design is to conduct us by the surest guides, to the highest state of temporal and eternal happiness, encourage our efforts, and accompany our unceasing prayers for success.

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